



St. Louis Symphony
Orchestra

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SLSO At-Home Learning *Enigma Variations*

Listen to the main theme from composer Edward Elgar's *Enigma Variations*. The melody is written out below.

[Listen Here](#) (0:00-0:46)

Andante (♩ = 63)
legato e sostenuto ten.
p molto espress. *pp* cresc. *ten.* *dim.*

After the theme has been played, Elgar then repeats it, but he varies it in some way each time it is repeated. This musical form is called **theme and variations**. Elgar wrote 14 variations on this theme. That's a lot of variations! Each of the 14 variations represents a different character in the composer's life.

There are so many ways to explore Elgar's characters. Here are a few to choose from:

1. Use adjectives to describe the music that could also be used to describe each character's personality or mood. For example, is the music/character friendly or mean? Happy or sad?
2. Demonstrate how each character might move based on what you hear. You can even dress up as the character and act out what you think he or she might be doing.
3. Elgar left us with the initials for each character. Using the character's initials, create a name for the character.
4. Draw a picture of each character. What would they be doing? How might they be dressed?

[Click Here](#) for a full recording of *Enigma Variations*, with timings for each variation and the characters' initials.



For a free digital download of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra (SLSYO) performing Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, visit <https://instantencore.com/RedeemAskFan.aspx?IEId=5004734>, create a login, and enter YPC2016 in the "search or redeem" field. For more information about the SLSYO, visit slo.org/youthorchestra.

